

## **Baghdad SUPERFROG pits brains, brawn against clock**

By JOC(SW) Cory Drake

Twenty-two teams competed in a Memorial Day weekend combat conditioning course called the Baghdad SUPERFROG which began at 5:30 a.m. Friday. The field of approximately 65 athletes raced each other and the clock to compete in a sequence of 12 events.

"Naval Special Warfare (NSW) missions range from combat swimmer operations to direct action in desert, jungle or winter environments" said Cmdr. Duncan Smith, the overall coordinator of the Baghdad SUPERFROG. "SEALs train to the notion that endurance is required to get to and from a target and strength is required to complete actions at the objective. The Baghdad SUPERFROG Combat Conditioning Course brings this principle of endurance and strength into a physical training environment suitable for athletes from all branches of the service."

The field consisted of teams broken down into four divisions. Male, female, coed and a division for "Old Toads," or teams comprised of 40+ year-old participants. Team members from several coalition member nations and a host of civilian contractors had to all meet the same challenges and complete the entire course in less than 100 minutes.

The Baghdad SUPERFROG, the first ever held outside the cradle of NSW, Coronado, Calif., served two purposes. According to Smith, the primary aim here was to commemorate the service and sacrifices of American fighting men and women who have gone before, and the second was to provide a unique physical and mental challenge on the grounds of the U.S. Embassy in Iraq.

The event kicked off with a piper and a snare percussionist playing a bagpipe-and-drum rendition of a Scottish martial tune. In keeping with the Memorial Day theme, the musicians played throughout the morning and again at Friday evening's awards ceremony.

The Baghdad SUPERFROG course consisted of two halves. The first was a 1.5-mile run, followed by a tire obstacle combined with a litter-carry, a rope-climb, body-armor pull-ups, a bench-press station, a low-crawl and a buddy-carry event.

The teams then sprinted 400 meters from the gym to the Olympic-sized pool for the course's second portion. On arrival, two team members put on desert camouflage utilities.

One at a time, two swimmers from each team completed one length of the pool and climbed out, performed 10 push-ups, re-entered the water and completed a lap. The third swimmer on each team treaded water the whole time.

"I think a lot of the swimmers were surprised by how much tougher it is to swim in a field uniform. Most seemed to relish the challenge, but we did have to pull two swimmers from different teams from the water when they began to look uncomfortable," said a Navy SEAL, who worked the pool portion of the event as a lifeguard. Both teams were given a time penalty for not completing their laps and then pushed on with the course. Monroe said an eye was kept toward safety at all times.

"The swim and push-up phase was by far the most gruesome portion of the race. I thought that I was going to be ok until I had to do 10 push-ups with soaking wet DCUs on. That added about 30 pounds. Then having to complete another half-lap was truly grueling, but well worth the strain," said a participant. "I need to pass on my thanks to all the event coordinators and volunteers. They put on a great race."



A command sergeant major motivates a SUPERFROG competition participant who is breaking down a 9mm pistol at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. SUPERFROG is a team combat conditioning course that pits teams of three against nine other teams, to include all services, countries, military or civilian. Naval Special Warfare courtesy photo.